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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000698

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR. JOINT  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [CVIS](#)  
SUBJECT: UPTICK IN SETTLER VIOLENCE IN APRIL

REF: A. JERUSALEM 648  
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 661  
[1](#)C. JERUSALEM 679  
[1](#)D. JERUSALEM 697

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Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Incidents of settler violence in April include multiple attacks on Palestinians in the Hebron area, clashes south of Gush Etzion settlement bloc, and damage to a Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) ambulance. Settler activist Nadia Matar called for the assassination of the Palestinian president and other PA officials in a March 18 speech. End summary.

Uptick in Settler Violence in April  
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[1](#)2. (C) Post has observed an uptick in settler violence in the West Bank in April, primarily in the southern West Bank. The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Hebron Matteo Benatti told Poloff on April 24 that "after a quiet winter, we are seeing a surge in settler violence this month."

-- Settlers broke into a Palestinian home on April 3 in Hebron's Old City, and into another on April 19 in H2 behind the settler-occupied "Beit Hadassah" building, according to Benatti.

-- Three Palestinian boys, ages 10, 12, and 15, told Poloff that IDF soldiers marched them at gunpoint to the Maon settlement April 5, where roughly a dozen settlers beat them (ref C). Benatti said the IDF soldiers left the boys sitting at a bus stop, and the settlers took them from there to Maon settlement, where they were beaten.

-- Settlers from Bat Ayin and Palestinians clashed near the village of Khirbat Safa April 8, leaving a total of at least 17 wounded in an incident that Palestinians described as retribution for the April 2 axe attack, and that settlers called an unprovoked Palestinian attack (ref A).

-- Masked settlers with clubs attacked three Palestinian women near a village south of Hebron on April 10, according to Christian Peacemaker Teams. Benatti said ICRC assisted one of the women, who was pregnant and suffered bruising on her arms and legs.

-- Settlers attacked a PRCS ambulance on April 11 in Hebron's Old City, smashing the vehicle's windows with rocks. Benatti said the ambulance was transporting a Palestinian patient from a hospital to her home in H2 when the attack occurred.

-- Settlers from Gush Etzion attacked Palestinian farmers near Beit Ummar (southwest of Bethlehem) on April 23, preventing them from accessing their lands near Kefar Etzion settlement. There were no injuries.

¶3. (C) Benatti said there have also been several incidents in the past month of settlers throwing stones at Palestinian houses, pedestrians, and vehicles parked in Hebron between H2 and Kiryat Arba settlement. He opined that Hebron settlers feel "more at ease" under the new GOI to "act with impunity."

#### Settler Activist Calls For Assassination of President Abbas

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¶4. (C) Settler activist Nadia Matar also made a death threat on March 19 against Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas while addressing a group at a New York City synagogue, saying, "We must kill all the terrorist leaders, starting with Mahmoud Abbas." (Note: Matar is co-founder of the Women in Green organization, which opposes a two-state solution and "giving up one inch of our Biblical homeland." Post has requested that Matar be included in the Visa watch-list. End note.)

Comment

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¶5. (C) The reasons for the uptick in settler violence are unclear. Some of the incidents in the Gush Etzion area may be related to the April 2 axe attack that killed a child in the Beit Ayin settlement. YESHA Council Chairman Dani Dayan commented to Poloff on April 22 that violence between settlers and West Bank Palestinians is cyclic in nature, with

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incidents on either side leading to retaliatory attacks. However, the attacks in and around Hebron seem unrelated to any Palestinian actions. End comment.

WALLES